

Stimulating the Brain and Senses Through Art

Arts Learning Spans a Lifetime: Read about Adult Arts Education on page 2.

The following arts education interview of **Dee Dickinson**, Chief Learning Officer and Co-founder of New Horizons for Learning; Tukwila School District Superintendent **Michael Silvers**; and **Susy Watts**, Pacific Lutheran University Faculty and Arts Education Consultant was conducted on-line by Washington State Arts Commission Arts in Education Program Manager Linda Bellon-Fisher.

Dee, would you explain multiple learning styles and why each brain functions differently?

Dee: Of the nearly six billion people on earth, no two have brains that are alike. From the research of many neuroscientists, including Dr. Marian Diamond at UC Berkeley, it is now a generally accepted fact that human brains change structurally and functionally as a result of learning

Drawing by a third grader learning shared concepts in art and math (faces and fractions) in the Arts Impact Summer School Lab in Tacoma.



Drawing by Tony, Lyon Elementary

and experience for better or for worse. Of course everyone's life experience is different, and people from different cultural, social, economic, and educational backgrounds have very different ways of thinking, learning, communicating, and behaving. This is critically important information for every parent and teacher, and it is the basis for the development of numerous theories about learning styles.

One of the earliest learning styles research indicated that people differ in being more or less visual, auditory, and kinesthetic (or physical) in how they take in and process information. Later, research described differences in "world view." That is, people who see the whole picture first (see the forest) and others who focus first on details (see the trees.) Our educational system is tailored primarily to the

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Arts Are Basic Education

Kris Tucker
Executive Director



The Washington State Arts Commission is committed to making arts education effective for schools and students. That's why we are working with the Governor's Office, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, artists and arts organizations across the state to support arts as basic education for all students, kindergarten through high school.

In 1998, this agency revamped our arts in education grant programs to invest in community consortia, or partnerships, established locally with: schools, community organizations and the local arts community (see page 3). The purpose is to "help communities develop strong arts programming that meets the specific needs of their local public school students, while utilizing community resources to help

schools implement the state's essential academic learning requirements in the arts."

That decision was based on evidence that the most effective arts education programs are based in broad community partnerships.

"...the presence and quality of arts education in public schools today requires an exceptional degree of involvement by influential segments of the community which value the arts in the total affairs of the school district: in governance, funding and program delivery." *Gaining the Arts Advantage, 1999*

The arts help students achieve.

Research confirms the importance of arts learning:

- ◆ Reading, writing and math skills are enhanced by the arts.
- ◆ Kids involved in the arts have higher SAT scores.

"School leaders repeatedly affirm: the single most critical factor in sustaining arts education in their schools is the active involvement of influential segments of the community in shaping and implementing the policies and programs of the district."

Gaining the Arts Advantage, 1999

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Adult Learning

Learning Through the Arts Participation Initiative

The Wallace Arts Participation Initiative is using new learning models to enhance cultural participation in ethnic, disabled, rural and low-income communities.

As one of 13 states to receive five-year funding from the Wallace Foundation to increase arts participation in our state, Washington State Arts Commission is working with 12 project partners.

These three-year grantees have formed a sustained statewide learning community to study arts participation concepts, share knowledge and best practices, develop arts leadership, and evaluate and document project successes.

Examples of projects include:

- Youth members of the Yakama Nation are collecting and performing tales of the coyote in order to preserve and promote traditional tribal stories.
- The Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center is surveying diverse audiences in the Central District of Seattle and its geographic service area, as well as African American audiences in broader King County.

Ultimately the Arts Participation Initiative goal is to reach and involve more members of the target communities (ethnic, disabled, rural and low income) in meaningful arts experiences as audiences, participating artists and/or arts supporters.

Evaluation is important to any new program and the Wallace Initiative is no exception. Participants will be counting the number of participants in each contract year and reporting the final budget for the grant contract. In addition, the project organizers are recording activities, and participant responses thereof, in order to record the qualitative outcomes of the projects.

The Allied Arts Council of Yakima Valley Mariachi Project works with Hispanic and other teens in local schools to learn and perform Mariachi music. The project goal is to develop the teachers and materials, resulting in credit-bearing classes, not just after-school clubs. The first high school has done so this year. The Council reports:

“We had about 45 to 50 people (multigenerational), from beginners to experts, playing and about 200 people in attendance (at the final summer concert). The teachers were amazed at how fast the students learned, how dedicated they were to their instruments, the guitar, violin and the trumpet. Here is one student’s reaction (told in Spanish): ‘I enjoyed learning how to play an instrument and the teachers were really nice and patient. Thanks to that, now I can play the guitar; I’m not really good at it but I’m getting there.’”

As the Arts Participation Initiative enters its second year with the 12 organizations, WSAC anticipates exciting journal reports of successful outcomes from the field. The task of designing a documentation process to share these results is in progress and will be reported in future WSAC newsletters.

For further information about this project and its learning community, contact project manager Mayumi Tsutakawa, mayumit@arts.wa.gov or call her at (360) 586-1266.

**What really counts is
what you learn
after you know it all.**

Helen Hayes/John Wooden

Passing Down the Generations

Often the only thread keeping a cultural tradition from extinction is one generation of knowledge. That’s why WSAC’s Folk Arts program encourages the passing down of traditions from elder artists to younger generations to help communities preserve their traditional arts through its Apprenticeship Program. Using an annual panel process, master artists are given stipends to instruct students of their choosing. The main review criteria are artistic skill of the master, traditionality of the art form, and the teacher and student’s relationship to the cultural group from which the tradition comes.

Susan Pavel, one of the Fiscal Year 2004 master artists, first studied Puget Salish weaving under master weaver Bruce Subiyay Miller, a prominent tradition-keeper for the Puget Salish tribes. Her dedication to the art form gave her a head start on mastery, and Bruce claimed her first blanket for his own, an honor typically bestowed only after several years of teaching. Her work has been seen in the Squaxin Island Tribal Museum, Library and Research Center during their SQ3Tsyay (Weaver’s Spirit Power) exhibit, as well

as at the Stonington’s Gallery and Snow Goose Gallery in Seattle, where her weavings were the only Puget Salish work displayed.

After more than five years with Bruce Subiyay, Susan has claimed her own Mastery, and is ready to teach her own Apprentices. Dalena Pavel, Susan’s sister-in-law, has also studied under Bruce Miller. Dalena will study carding, spinning, and weaving. Susan will teach her twill and twine techniques, utilizing traditional patterns that she learned from her own Master.

Both Master and Apprentice are dedicated to the preservation of the Puget Salish culture; by teaching and learning weaving they hope to accomplish just that. Someday Dalena hopes to be able to teach her own children the art, passing it on for the future.



Salish Weaver Susan Pavel displays a blanket of her design.

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This newsletter was
produced, printed and
mailed at a cost of 72
cents per copy.

Building Arts Education Through Community Partnerships

By Linda Bellon-Fisher
Arts in Education Program Manager

In 1999, the WSAC Arts In Education Program worked with educators, artists, administrators, and parents to build a new program that would support communities in implementing the Essential Academic Learning Requirements in the Arts (state standards) by utilizing local resources, meeting the specific needs of local

students, and developing local arts education expertise. The resulting program is the Arts Education Community Consortium. This school year, many funded consortia are in their fourth or fifth year. Arts education in these schools has expanded greatly due to growing enthusiasm following teacher training in standards-based arts education, increased support by school administrators when test scores rise and school cultures improve, and increased interest and participation by parents and community members impressed with students’ creative abilities.

Through the Consortium Program, we have learned that hands-on training increases teachers’ enthusiasm for arts education and results not only in a commitment to integrating the arts into their classrooms, but also developing better arts curriculum and cutting edge assessments. Mari Evans, arts specialist in Yelm Community Schools, said, “Because of increased teacher interest, the art teachers are working on arts assessments this year. This is not a directive from our district; it’s because we—the teachers—see it as a need.”



Hamilton International Middle School teachers, Dias de los Muertos workshop at The Burke Museum. Photo by Sue Ranney, Hamilton International Middle School

Building Arts Ed Support

The First Children’s Gallery Walk of the Whatcom County Arts Education Consortium, led by Allied Arts of Whatcom County and directed by Gail Weiss, included student artwork from one school in Mount Baker School District. Two years later all seven school districts in the county participated, as well as several private schools. Approximately 2,500 students exhibited their work for up to two weeks at over 25 downtown Bellingham venues.

Excellent participation in Whatcom County Consortium’s events and planning is an important aspect of their success. The consortium holds an annual community forum each year. Last winter 50 arts education supporters were invited to focus during the daylong event on what they could do (as educators, parents, and community members) to support arts education for their children. The resulting data was incorporated into the consortium’s plans.

“With a strong focus on art instruction, Mountain Meadow’s WASL scores continue to improve. The Mountain Meadow combined math and reading scores for schools our size were #1 in the state as of October.”

Tracy Livingston, teacher at Mountain Meadow Elementary in Buckley

Improving Student Achievement

The most important development for Kimball Elementary, said Joyce Mork-O’Brian, the Family Partnerships Coordinator, has been a clear demonstration of academic improvement by the students participating in Jack Straw Production’s consortium in the Seattle area. “Our standardized test scores this year showed a significant increase in all areas for Latino children, which was not demonstrated by any other ethnic group in the school. We attribute this improvement to the increase in parental participation fostered by [Jack Staw’s] *Historias de las Familias*.” In fact Kimball parents who participated in the project became increasingly active in the school.

“I teach 8th grade where it is a constant challenge to keep students interested in the content. The two biggest challenges I found are to get them to read and to understand what they are reading. The ideas/activities presented at BTiC* definitely hook my students into their learning. The activities connect the body and mind, which is how true learning takes place.”

**Seattle Repertory Theatre’s consortium, called Bringing Theatre into the Classroom*
Liz Moore of Post Middle School in Arlington

Learning About Other Cultures



Hamilton International Middle School students, illuminated calacas project. Photo by Sue Ranney, Hamilton International Middle School

The International Arts Consortium (IAC), which is led by Seattle International Children’s Festival and partners with John Stanford International School and Hamilton International Middle School, includes multi-cultural community events in their plans. On October 31st, the IAC, with additional funding from Cultural Development Authority of King County and community partner Dunn Lumber, staged “Oaxaca in Oallingford,” to introduce this traditionally Mexican celebration to their north Seattle neighborhood. John Stanford students paraded with illuminated calaveras (skulls) to Hamilton International, where Hamilton students displayed their giant tapete (sand painting) and illuminated calacas (life-size skeletons of humans and animals). John Stanford students then paraded through the Wallingford business district and performed a Spanish song at Wallingford Center.

Storytelling Through Glass

By Jill Nelson

Artist Ruth Brockmann furnishes the spirit at Shahala Middle School, in the Evergreen School District in Vancouver, with her installation “Singing the Souls Back Home,” a recent addition to the State Art Collection. The subject matter of her work involves the interrelationship of all living forms, their spirits and vital connections to humans.



Detail of *Singing the Souls Back Home* by Ruth Brockman.

Singing the Souls Back Home tells a story of the indigenous people of the region and the importance of local natural resources in their daily lives. The images are filled with symbolism from the artist’s research on the Katlagakya (Shahala) people of the Columbia River.

When asked what students gain by having the public art program in

their schools, Brockmann was passionate about her feelings of the human spirit and spoke about the importance of communication and connections through art.

“In our society, kids are more worried about what tennis shoes to wear. They’re lost in a material world,” Brockman said. “It’s easy for middle school kids to be drawn into materialistic values, so it’s important to have a connection with another aspect of thought and creativity on a higher level of consciousness.”

The artist said that creativity and imagination allow your mind to flow and to see things in broader dimensions. To a 12 or 13-year-old student, art gives depth to naïve thinking. She believes children at the middle school level need guidance while merging into adult identities, especially during puberty when they have so many questions.

Brockmann’s early introductions to art came in the form of music. While learning to play the viola, violin, and cello, she learned the fundamental art of patience. Her parents saw a gift in her and nurtured that talent. Brockmann feels that her role as an artist is important to nurture a new generation. Her perspective is creative with a traditional heart and a peaceful mind. By sharing herself and her work, she feels that she has a better understanding about her place in the world. “I want to expose the mysteries of life that keep us all alive,” she said. In her studio, Brockmann returns to the elements of earth, air, and fire, to shape her illuminating glass works.

“I’m working with materials from the earth,” Brockmann said. “The sand and glass itself is natural material. When the glass is hot it is fluid like water,

and then there is the air, which is always present. I’m aware of the elements all the time.” From the sweating heat of the kiln she pulls out globes of hot glass and begins to mold and shape ideas, bringing form and texture to her interpretations of the spirit.

Brockmann especially enjoys working with her hands. She explained that working with kiln-form glass is like bread making—once you know the basic principles of combining yeast and flour and eggs, one can make many forms of bread. “I love working with glass because it really speaks about energy and light consciousness,” she said. The beauties of her glass works are enhanced by their ability to transform light. Colorful and almost cartoon-like, her art appeals to children.

At 49, Brockmann says that she is always learning, and that makes her excited. She uses her knowledge of alchemy and science while working with her materials. She has taken seminars on casting operations, polytech mold making, and industrial products. As technology advances, her work changes. Ironically, Brockmann uses these new technologies to create art that represents basic humanistic values, spiritual connections, and tribal heritage.

“Sometimes people are sensitive to what I speak about,” Brockmann said. Topics involving legends of animal spirits or river spirits can sometimes provoke a leery eye. “The Shahala people were very shamanic,” Brockmann explained. As a woman in tune with nature she felt connected with them. When starting the Shahala Middle School Project she even asked her ancestors for guidance.

“Singing the Souls Back Home” reinforces the importance of relationships with the family and nature. Brockmann believes that being open to learning and listening and the process of becoming more aware is imperative. And that’s where artists come into play. “Working with our hands, our hearts and our minds, and to teach that to our younger generation. Story

telling is so important,” Brockmann said. “Music is important. Art is so important. The role of an artist is so important.”



Detail of *Singing the Souls Back Home* by Ruth Brockman.

See more State Art Collection project descriptions and an online gallery of several pieces at www.arts.wa.gov. Artists interested in applying to the Public Art Artists Resource Bank should contact Christel Ratliff at (360) 753-5894 or ChristelR@arts.wa.gov.

Washington Makes Progress in the West

The academic, emotional, and cultural benefits of arts education have been researched, published, and disseminated broadly. The National Endowment for the Arts not only has been supporting arts education through the state arts agencies and arts organizations, but also has been building arts ed partnerships with other national agencies and organizations, like the U.S. Department of Education. State arts agencies, too, have been partnering with their state departments of education and others to support arts education in the schools, and many local arts agencies participate in building arts in the schools statewide, as well as locally.

On-line information, like the sites at right, provide a broad range of information from assessing the level of arts education in schools to cutting edge information that links the importance of the arts to developing minds of all ages.

With such strong national and statewide support, especially during the last two decades, how far have we progressed in Washington State schools? And how far have we progressed in the west? The western states have much in common due to size, culture, numerous remote areas, and a history of less funding for arts education in the schools, so one method of looking at progress is to compare Washington arts education mandates with those of the other 12 western states—Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

Arts Education Mandate

78% of the western states, **including Washington**, have mandated the arts as part of public education.

Arts Standards

85% of western states, **including Washington**, have mandatory statewide arts standards. California's state arts standards are voluntary, and Colorado's are mandatory if the arts instruction is offered.

Arts Assessments

Using state-level assessments is mandatory only in Utah, but reporting back to the state is voluntary. Hawaii, Montana and Wyoming require assessment, but it is a local process. Both Idaho and Washington are planning for future arts assessments. In Washington, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction's program supervisors in the arts, social studies and international education, and health and fitness, have developed a plan to provide mandatory classroom-based assessment models at all three benchmarks—grades 5, 8, and high school—as well as common rubrics to be used for scoring at the local level. They also are planning to offer training related to scoring student work. For further information, contact AnnRene Joseph, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction's (OSPI) Arts Supervisor, at (360) 725-6365 or ajoseph@ospi.wednet.edu.

Arts High School Graduation Requirement

Arizona and Montana require one credit in the arts, and Utah requires 1.5 credits. Some states have a broad requirement like a credit in the arts, a foreign language, or humanities. In Washington, students who begin high school in 2004 must earn one credit in the arts in order to graduate.

College Admission

In the west, only Arizona and California require an arts credit for college admission.

Licensure for Arts Teachers

By law, eight of the 13 western states, **including Washington**, require licensing to be an arts specialist. An additional state, Utah, requires licensure for high school only. However, there are issues, for instance with dance education which is almost nonexistent in the west. Dr. David Anderson, of Washington State's Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB), explained, "PESB is implementing endorsement subject knowledge assessments to be required of candidates seeking endorsements to Washington teaching certificates. The PESB is working with Washington dance educators to develop a portfolio assessment of subject knowledge for the dance endorsement to be piloted in the spring of 2004. Passing this assessment will be required of candidates seeking a dance endorsement beginning September 2005."

Licensure for General Teachers

Six western states—Alaska, Arizona, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Wyoming—require teachers to take one or more courses in the arts or methods of teaching the arts. **Washington does not.**

Preservice Arts Requirements

Five states—Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, and Utah—require arts coursework for a general education degree. **Washington does not.**

Task Forces

Six western states, including Washington, have current task forces or commissions working on arts education improvements. In Washington, the Arts Implementation Task Force (AITF) was founded in 2001 when Superintendent of Public Instruction Terry Bergeson and WSAC Executive Director Kris Tucker organized a group of leaders to discuss arts education needs in Washington schools. The enthusiastic participants—sponsored by the OSPI, WSAC, and the Alliance for Better Schools—have continued to meet, prioritize needs and develop three committees: Communications (to increase awareness of and support for comprehensive and sequential, standards-based, K-12 arts programs); Exemplary Programs (to provide guidance and strong examples of how to build comprehensive and sequential, standards-based, K-12 arts programs); and Professional Development (to establish a continuum for professional development in the arts for K-12 teachers).

SMART LINKS

The National Art Education Association has a flyer with tips that parents can use to promote art education programs in their children's schools:
www.naea-reston.org/news.html

The National Governors Association has a variety of reports on the impacts of the arts on education:
www.nga.org/nga/1,1169,C_REPORTS,00.html

Arts. Ask for More
www.wsartsalliance.com/MoreArt

New Horizons for Learning
www.newhorizons.org

More information, and the statistics listed in this article, are on the Arts Education Partnership website. To access details on all states, click on the "2003-2004 States Arts Education Policy Database" link at www.aep-arts.org.

Community Partnerships, cont. from page 3



Community Engagement

The Yelm Community Schools Consortium has a five-year plan called ACT—Artists in the classroom, Community-based visual art, and Teacher training. The community-based aspect includes the annual Yelm Art Walk, which displays the art of students, art teachers, and artists throughout the community. Art



Tacoma Art Museum’s Art Day at Yelm Timberland Library; fireplace surround in background created by students and ceramacist Barbara Kates.

Walk partners include Nisqually Regional Arts Council/Yelm Partners for Performing Arts, Nisqually Valley News, and Yelm Area Chamber of Commerce. Tacoma Art Museum, also a consortium partner, hosts a Yelm Day at the museum and has been presenting hands-on, visual art activities at the Yelm Timberland Library. Additionally, Yelm students work with local artists to create public art pieces, like the intriguing double-sided fireplace surround created by students and ceramicist Barb Kates for the Yelm Timberland Library.

Leveraging Private and Federal Funds

Arts Impact, the consortium led by the Cultural Council of the Greater Tacoma Area, has become a national model in arts education professional development. This partnership between the Cultural Council, Tacoma Art Museum, Broadway Center for the Performing Arts and, as of 2002, the Museum of Glass trains classroom teachers to independently teach visual art, dance, and theater. Each year of the two-year program includes the hands-on Summer Institute and a one-on-one mentorship with a teaching artist during the school year.

“WSAC funding made this program possible and in the first four years leveraged more than \$300,000 of investment by foundations and corporations.”

Julia Garnett, director, Cultural Council of Greater Tacoma

Arts Impact received the only US Department of Education (U.S. DOE) Arts Education Model Development and Dissemination Grant awarded in Washington State in the grant’s three-year history.

Success of the pilot program prompted Puget Sound Educational Service District to partner with Arts Impact in an application to the U.S. DOE. They were awarded \$967,000 in 2002 and have increased the number of districts they work with from 3 to 10. The DOE grant also is funding a Summer School Lab for students through which Arts Impact graduates are teaching a fully integrated curriculum, consisting of math and literacy concepts that are also arts concepts.

This year 22 community consortia throughout the state are being funded by WSAC’s Arts Education Community Consortium Grants. Further information can be found at www.arts.wa.gov/progAIE/aieCC.html.

Adult Learning Opportunities

At its November 6 quarterly commission meeting in Vancouver, Washington the Washington State Arts Commission approved additional learning opportunities for artists and arts administrators through the agency’s Professional Development Assistance Program.

The change in guidelines limits organizations and individuals to one PDAP grant in each biennium (one grant every other year) to allow for more participants, effective with Fiscal Year 2005 funding.

These small matching travel grants allow arts professionals to attend workshops, conferences or other learning opportunities. On a first come, first served basis, up to one half of the costs of attendance, or a maximum of \$500, will be awarded.

New applicants are encouraged to apply now for projects or events that occur between January 1 and June 30, 2004. Download an application at www.arts.wa.gov.

Commission Announces 2004 Meetings

The Washington State Arts Commission will hold its quarterly meetings, open to the public, next year in the following locations (subject to change; check www.arts.wa.gov for details closer to meeting date).

- February 18 - Olympia
- May 12 - Bremerton
- July 29 & 30 - Walla Walla
- November 4 - Duvall

Goodbye and Welcome

Many thanks to Representative Mary Skinner, Yakima, for her eight years of support and service as a Washington State Arts Commissioner.

Newly appointed from the Legislature to the Commission is Representative Rodney Tom of Medina. We are pleased to welcome him to the position.



Students who study the arts score higher on verbal and math SAT scores than those without arts in the classroom. (The College Board, Profile of College-Bound Seniors National Report for 2000, 2001, 2002).

Young people who participate in the arts for at least three hours, three days each week for one year are:

- 4x more likely to be recognized for academic achievement
 - 3x more likely to be elected to class office
 - 4x more likely to participate in a math and science fair
 - 3x more likely to win an award for school attendance
- (Living the Arts through Language + Learning: A Report on Community-based Youth Organizations, Shirley Brice Heath, 1998)*

For at-risk youth, the arts contribute to lower recidivism rates; increased self-esteem; the acquisition of job skills; and the development of much needed creative thinking, problem solving and communications skills. (The Impact of Arts Education on Workforce Preparation, National Governors Association, 2002)

Stimulating the Brain and Senses Through Art, cont. from cover

latter (field independent) style, although there are probably more of the first, or field sensitive, kinds of learners. He pointed out that instruction should offer opportunities for both kinds of learners with the teacher as a “warm demander.” Learning through the arts can reach both kinds of learners.

In 1983, Dr. Howard Gardner, co-director of Project Zero at Harvard, described his Theory of Multiple Intelligences and pointed out that people have different kinds of intelligence that can be developed in different ways and to different extents. They include not only logical/mathematical and verbal (which are the focus of most intelligence and school tests) but also visual/spatial, bodily/kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and a recent addition—naturalist. These intelligences are not only of aesthetic and practical value, but also make it possible to learn in different ways. Needless to say, many of these are related to the arts.

As there is increased emphasis in the schools on “leaving no child behind” and “bridging the achievement gap,” we are seeing growing interest in teaching the arts not only as separate subjects, but also as tools for learning. The arts are languages that all people speak—that cut across racial, cultural, social, educational, and economic barriers. They are symbol systems as important as letters and numbers. They integrate mind, body, and spirit and provide opportunities for self-expression, making it possible for abstractions to become more understandable as they take concrete form in the visual arts, music, dance, and drama. They create a seamless connection between motivation, instruction, assessment, and practical application—leading to “deep understanding.” They make it possible to experience processes from beginning to end, and provide immediate feedback and opportunities for reflection. In fact they provide the means for every student to learn.

Susy, how do you relate multiple learning styles to the progress you’ve observed in hands-on teacher training programs, like Arts Impact?

Susy: *Arts Impact* honors several pedagogies in its approach to teaching the arts. Using multiple learning styles is a teaching method that influenced the *Arts Impact Summer School Lab* program this past summer.

Tacoma Public School students in second, third, and fourth grade, recommended for summer school by their teachers because they struggled in reading, writing, and/or math, were placed with graduates of the *Arts Impact* teacher-training program in the arts. Five weeks of lessons planned by artist-mentors and classroom teachers focused on shared concepts in reading/visual art, math/dance, theater/writing, and other discipline combinations. Students with different learning modalities danced number strings, acted their exaggerated poetry, and drew portraits to expand understandings of fractions. Students described time and place in visual art, created story structures in theater, and danced numeric patterns.

Not every child demonstrated their conceptual understandings in the same way. Some students continued to work in standard, expected ways. Some students could only paint, dance, or act their understandings. And some students demonstrated their understandings both ways—traditionally and artistically! It raises the question: “If a child understands a concept found in more than one discipline, is it necessary for them to ultimately demonstrate their knowledge conventionally, or would showing it artistically be enough?”



Yelm middle school students taking lessons from artist Neo Brown.

That is a thought-provoking question, especially in this time when standardized testing requires conventional demonstration of knowledge by all students. Michael, as a school district superintendent, how would you respond to the question Susy raised?

Michael: I think students in schools today need to show proficiencies and meet standards in a number of areas and in many ways. Conventional assessment has its place, as does authentic assessment through the arts. Washington State’s assessment with WASL is essential for students in reading, math and writing, and science. Students should be able to demonstrate their knowledge and skills on the WASL.

However, I also think that students should be able to show what they learn through authentic assessment measures. The arts have led the way in the use of authentic assessment as students are evaluated in live or taped performances or student portfolios. There are some other student qualities, assessed uniquely through the arts, which are difficult to measure conventionally, such as creativity, perseverance, and personal motivation.

When I visit classrooms in our schools, I have observed the smiling faces of many children who are involved with arts projects and performances. I think participation in the arts gives students a way to achieve on a personal level—often within the context of achieving as a group—that is identified with the school.

Michael’s observation that the arts provide students a way to achieve on a personal level, often within the context of achieving as a group, coincides with Howard Gardner’s interpersonal and intrapersonal learning styles. Dee, what are the benefits of the performing arts in this context?

Dee: The personal intelligences are critically important to develop as young people grow into adulthood. They offer opportunities to learn how

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- ◆ High-risk students are more likely to stay in school if involved in the arts.
- ◆ The arts contribute to reading comprehension, fundamental thinking skills, motivation to learn, self-confidence and a healthy school environment.

The National Governors Association documents the impact of arts education on workforce preparation. Schooling in the arts helps prepare students for the 21st century workforce and an economy built on knowledge, ideas and creativity. According to that report (<http://www.nga.org/center/>): “Programs incorporating the arts have proven to be educational, developmentally rich, and cost-effective ways to provide students the skills they need to be productive participants in today’s economy. Arts programs combine academic and workforce development skills in a manner attractive to participants of all age groups and economic backgrounds.”

Too few Washington students have arts as part of their regular school day.
That concerns me as a parent, grandparent and citizen. The world of the future needs citizens who respect differences, think creatively, work collaboratively, and express themselves effectively.

As the State’s education reform agenda moves forward, WSAC continues our commitment to the arts as part of a basic education. Our arts in education grant programs are based on the Essential Academic Learning Requirements in the Arts – and we are reminded daily that the arts are essential, academic and required for a complete education.

Through grants, training programs, research and documentation – and through partnerships at the state, local and national level – we are investing in effective arts education. Inside this newsletter are stories of some terrific projects and some exciting partnerships. Here, too, you’ll find facts and resources for learning more about arts education.

“From music and dance to painting and sculpting, the arts allow us to explore new worlds and to view life from another perspective. They also encourage individuals to sharpen their skills and abilities and to nurture their imagination and intellect.”

President George W. Bush

Arts Learning is a Life-Long Opportunity
My desk is stacked high with important research, policy documents and professional journals – important tools for keeping up with trends in the arts world. Also important are my poetry books, colored pencils, quilt squares and jazz recordings. The arts contribute to the quality of my life every day, and I expect will continue to teach me about our heritage, our world and our potential.

I hope you, too, have opportunities to learn in and through the arts. WSAC’s commitment to life-long learning is demonstrated through folk arts apprenticeships, heritage tour guides, support for arts training institutes and professional development grants.

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Stimulating the Brain and Senses Through Art, cont. from page 7



First grader drawing live model, Tacoma Art Museum workshop, Yelm Timberland Library

to communicate with other people and to exercise the skills of leadership, as well as being cooperative and productive members of a group. In addition to developing interpersonal intelligence, they also develop the intrapersonal ability to explore our inner world of thoughts and feelings and bring them into the outer world of experience. These skills are important throughout the school years, but the opportunities to exercise them are too often cut in response to greater emphasis on “the basic skills” and raising test scores. It may not be recognized sufficiently that the strategies and learning experiences that are cut are the very ways that we can help all children to become more successful at learning in addition to developing character and the skills mentioned above.

The arts, including the visual arts, music, dance, and drama, are all wonderful vehicles for learning that “leave no child behind.” They develop all of the intelligences, but especially the personal intelligences.

Children can learn about historical events not only by reading about them, but also by painting them in a group mural or timeline, or acting them out, or writing a song about them. Think of the opportunities to collaborate, communicate, and develop creativity!

Children can better understand great literary works by performing a skit that might have happened with the characters between chapters in a book, or a student might be a newspaper reporter interviewing one of the great poets. Even in high school, students will need to read more deeply if their assignment is to respond to a novel

or short story or poem in any way except in words. In the process of creating a painting, or play, or song, they will need to read even more carefully and in greater depth, and a fringe benefit is that they probably will always remember that piece of literature.

Students might spend an evening doing a “dance of the DNA,” as a group of 100 students, parents, and teachers performed in one high school. Younger children might choreograph a dance of the solar system, or draw a mural of the water cycle. Mathematical concepts are often difficult abstractions for many children; however, when we have an opportunity to hold ideas in our hands, they become more easily understandable. It is possible to use computer graphics to understand many of these concepts, or various kinds of colorful manipulatives, or, as one dancer we know has done, dance out mathematical equations or physics concepts.

These are just a few of the ways that interpersonal intelligences can be exercised. They are highly motivating and joyful, and they provide a safe environment for taking risks. We cannot afford to abandon these effective ways of teaching and learning, and despite cuts in budgets we must persist in demonstrating their value for all students.

You can read more about learning at New Horizons for Learning, www.newhorizons.org. For more information about the Arts Impact Program, see the article *Building Arts Education through Community Partnerships* on page 3.

“Art does not reproduce the visible, but makes visible that which is not easily seen.”
Kimon Nikolaides, arts educator

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Funding for the Washington State Arts Commission and its programs is provided by the state of Washington and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

